

**POL 5401**

**WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM POLICY**

Resource Contact: Dam Safety Office

Effective Date: 07-01-91

References: RCW 43.21A.064  
RCW 86.16.035  
Chapter 173-175 WAC

Revised: 07-01-1999

**PERIODIC INSPECTION OF EXISTING DAMS - FEDERAL DAMS**

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

In accordance with WAC 173-175-020(3), dams owned by federal agencies will not be inspected by the Dam Safety Section, provided the federal agency or their designated consultant conducts regular periodic inspections by qualified dam safety engineers.

The DSO will coordinate with the Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation dam safety programs, and may accompany and assist them on inspections when invited. Also, the DSO may perform inspections of these agencies' dams as needed to provide technical assistance to the State Emergency Management Division, for emergency planning purposes, or in the event of an actual emergency.

Ecology will conduct periodic inspections in those cases where a dam is owned by a federal agency, but regular, periodic inspections are not performed by qualified dam safety engineers.

**DISCUSSION:**

Historically, Dam Safety Office policy has held that federally owned facilities are exempt from state regulation when the federal agencies have their own dam safety program. In particular, the Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation provide copies of inspection reports to Ecology, and the Bureau of Reclamation meets with the Dam Safety Office annually to discuss their inspection activities. This policy will, therefore, provide consistency with policy POL 5102 and will prevent redundancy in periodic inspection activity of federally owned and operated dams.

For those dams owned by a federal agency, but not included in a regular periodic inspection program by qualified dam safety engineers, this policy identifies Ecology as the agency responsible for conducting regular periodic inspections.

**PROCEDURES:**

In those cases where Ecology is responsible for periodic inspections, the inspections will be conducted on a frequency according to Policy POL 5404.

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**Special Note:** These policies and procedures are used to guide and ensure consistency among water resources program staff in the administration of laws and regulations. These policies and procedures are not formal administrative regulations that have been adopted through a rule-making process. In some cases, the policies may not reflect subsequent changes in statutory law or judicial findings, but they are indicative of the department's practices and interpretations of laws and regulations at the time they are adopted. If you have any questions regarding a policy or procedure, please contact the department.